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Atty. Docket No.: 110768.00102

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-43. (Cancelled)

44. (Currently Amended) A method for selectively accepting an electronic message having a sender address and ~~transferred~~ sent from a remote host to a one or more recipient addresses, the method comprising determining whether the sender address exists, and accepting the electronic message if the sender address exists.

E 45. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 44, wherein the step of determining whether the sender address exists comprises establishing a test connection to an authorized mailhost for the sender address, sending a test transaction specifying the sender address to the authorized mailhost, and determining if the authorized mailhost affirmatively accepts the sender address as a recipient ~~determines the quality of an initial affirmative response by issuing a test message having an address that is believed to not exist, and accepting the electronic message if the test message is rejected.~~

46. (Currently Amended) A method for selectively accepting an electronic message having a ~~potentially forged sender address and sent, the potentially forged sender address having a sender~~

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~~domain name~~, from a remote host ~~having a domain name~~ to one or more recipient addresses, the method comprising determining if the remote host is in the ~~hierarchical~~ domain of the sender address, and accepting the electronic message if the remote host is in the domain of the sender address.

47. (Currently Amended) A method for selectively accepting an electronic message ~~transferred~~ having a sender address and sent from a remote host to one or more ~~users~~ recipient addresses, the method comprising sending to the remote host a protocol transactions that might be used to forward mail from an unknown origin, to the remote host and monitoring the remote host response to determine whether the remote host will accept the protocol transactions that might be used to forward mail from an unknown origin by the remote host, rejecting and not accepting the electronic message if the remote host accepts the protocol transaction.

48. (Currently Amended) A method for verifying an e-mail address having a ~~sending~~ domain, the method comprising sending a first test message transaction specifying the e-mail address to an authorized mailhost for the ~~sending domain, accepting the e-mail address if the authorized mailhost accepts the test message, and rejecting~~ classifying the e-mail address as invalid if the authorized mailhost ~~does not accept~~ rejects the first test message transaction.

49. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 48, wherein the authorized mailhost is a mail exchanger host for the domain of the e-mail address.

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50. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 48, wherein the authorized mailhost is the host with has the same name as the sending domain of the e-mail address.

51. (Currently Amended) The A-method of claim 48 ~~for verifying an e-mail address having a sending domain, the method, further comprising sending to the authorized mailhost a first test message specifying the e-mail address to an authorized mailhost for the sending domain, marking the e-mail address as invalid if the authorized mailhost does not accept the first test message, sending a second test message specifying transaction specifying an arbitrary e-mail address that is believed to not exist to at the authorized mailhost if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test message, marking classifying the e-mail address as valid if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test message transaction and rejects the second test method transaction, and marking classifying the e-mail address as indeterminate if the authorized mailhost accepts both the first test transaction and the second test messages transaction.~~

52. (New) The method of claim 44, further comprising not accepting the electronic message if the sender address is determined not to exist.

53. (New) The method of claim 46, further comprising not accepting the electronic message if the remote host is not in the domain of the sender address.

54. (New) The method of claim 47, further comprising the step of accepting the electronic message if the remote host rejects the protocol transaction.

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55. (New) The method of claim 48, further comprising classifying the e-mail address as valid if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction.

56. (New) The method of claim 48, further comprising not accepting electronic messages specifying the e-mail address if the e-mail address is classified as invalid.

57. (New) The method of claim 48, further comprising rejecting forged e-mail addresses submitted to a web site.

58. (New) A system for selectively accepting an electronic message having a sender address and sent from a remote host to one or more recipient addresses, the system comprising an address verification filter determining whether the sender address exists and accepting the electronic message if the sender address exists.

59. (New) The system of claim 58, said address verification filter not accepting the electronic message if the sender address is determined not to exist.

60. (New) The system of claim 58, said address verification filter establishing a test connection from said system to an authorized mailhost for the sender address, sending a test transaction specifying the sender address to the authorized mailhost, and determining if the authorized mailhost affirmatively accepts the sender address as a recipient.

61. (New) A system for selectively accepting an electronic message having a sender address and sent from a remote host to one or more recipient addresses, the system comprising an

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address verification filter determining if the remote host is in the domain of the sender address, and accepting the electronic message if the remote host is in the domain of the sender address.

62. (New) The system of claim 61, said address verification filter not accepting the electronic message if the remote host is not in the domain of the sender.

63. (New) A system for selectively accepting an electronic message having a sender address and sent from a remote host to one or more recipient addresses, the system comprising an address verification filter sending to the remote host a protocol transaction that might be used to forward mail from an unknown origin, monitoring the remote host response to determine whether the remote host will accept the protocol transaction, and not accepting the electronic message if the remote host accepts the protocol transaction.

64. (New) The system of claim 63, said address verification filter accepting the electronic message if the remote host rejects the protocol transaction.

65. (New) A system for verifying an e-mail address having a domain, the system comprising an address verifier sending a first test transaction specifying the e-mail address to an authorized mailhost for the domain, and classifying the e-mail address as invalid if the authorized mailhost rejects the first test transaction.

66. (New) The system of claim 65, wherein the authorized mailhost is a mail exchanger host for the domain of the e-mail address.

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67. (New) The system of claim 65, wherein the authorized mailhost has the same name as the domain.

68. (New) The system of claim 65, wherein the address verifier comprises an address verification filter that selectively accepts electronic messages having e-mail addresses.

69. (New) The system of claim 68, said address verifier not accepting electronic messages specifying the e-mail address if the e-mail address is classified as invalid.

70. (New) The system of claim 65, wherein said address verifier rejects forged e-mail addresses submitted to a web site.

71. (New) The system of claim 65, said address verifier classifying the e-mail address as valid if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction.

72. (New) The system of claim 65, said address verifier further sending to the authorized mailhost a second test transaction specifying an arbitrary e-mail address that is believed to not exist at the authorized mailhost, classifying the e-mail address as valid if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction and rejects the second test transaction, and classifying the e-mail address as indeterminate if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction and the second test transaction.

73. (New) An article of manufacture for selectively accepting an electronic message having a sender address and sent from a remote host to one or more recipient addresses, the article of

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manufacture comprising a computer-readable medium having stored thereon instructions which, when performed by a processor, cause the processor to execute the steps comprising the steps of: determining whether the sender address exists and accepting the electronic message if the sender address exists.

74. (New) The article of manufacture of claim 73, further comprising the step of not accepting the electronic message if the sender address is determined not to exist.

E (75. (New) The article of manufacture of claim 73, further comprising the step of establishing a test connection to an authorized mailhost for the sender address, sending a test transaction specifying the sender address to the authorized mailhost, and determining if the authorized mailhost affirmatively accepts the sender address as a recipient.

76. (New) An article of manufacture for selectively accepting an electronic message having a sender address and sent from a remote host to one or more recipient addresses, the article of manufacture comprising a computer-readable medium having stored thereon instructions which, when performed by a processor, cause the processor to execute the steps comprising the steps of: determining if the remote host is in the domain of the sender address, and accepting the electronic message if the remote host is in the domain of the sender address.

77. (New) The article of claim 76, further comprising the step of not accepting the electronic message if the remote host is not in the domain of the sender address.

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78. (New) An article of manufacture for selectively accepting an electronic message having a sender address and sent from a remote host to one or more recipient addresses, the article of manufacture comprising a computer-readable medium having stored thereon instructions which, when performed by a processor, cause the processor to execute the steps comprising the steps of: sending to the remote host a transaction that might be used to forward mail from an unknown origin, monitoring the remote host response to determine whether the remote host will accept the transaction, and not accepting the electronic message if the remote host accepts the transaction.

79. (New) The article of manufacture of claim 78, further comprising the step of accepting the electronic message if the remote host rejects the transaction.

80. (New) An article of manufacture for verifying an e-mail address having a domain, the article of manufacture comprising a computer-readable medium having stored thereon instructions which, when performed by a processor, cause the processor to execute the steps comprising the steps of: sending a first test transaction specifying the e-mail address to an authorized mailhost for the domain, and classifying the e-mail address as invalid if the authorized mailhost rejects the first test transaction.

81. (New) The article of manufacture of claim 80, further comprising classifying the e-mail address as valid if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction.

82. (New) The article of manufacture of claim 80, wherein the authorized mailhost is a mail

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exchanger host for the domain of the e-mail address.

83. (New) The article of manufacture of claim 80, wherein the authorized mailhost has the same name as the domain.

84. (New) The article of manufacture of claim 80, further comprising the step of not accepting messages specifying the e-mail address if the e-mail address is classified as invalid.

85. (New) The article of manufacture of claim 80, further comprising sending to the authorized mailhost a second test transaction specifying an arbitrary e-mail address that is believed to not exist at the authorized mailhost, classifying the e-mail address as valid if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction and rejects the second test transaction, and classifying the e-mail address as indeterminate if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction and the second test transaction.
